

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of using the Internet to provide return labels to customers for facilitating returns of merchandise, comprising the steps of:
  - 5 receiving, from a customer, a request to initiate return processing, via a web access tool associated with the customer;
  - displaying return information at the web access tool;
  - 10 receiving return-related data from the customer, via the web access tool, thereby identifying a return item; and
  - generating data for printing a return label.
- 15 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the displaying step is performed by displaying a return information web page.
- 20 3. The method of Claim 2, further comprising the step, performed after the receiving step, of displaying a return confirmation message on a new web page.
- 25 4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step, performed after the receiving step, of displaying a return confirmation message on the return information web page.

5        5. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the  
step of accessing a database to obtain customer  
information about the customer, and wherein the  
displaying step includes displaying at least part of the  
customer information.

10       6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the  
step of accessing a database to obtain customer  
transaction information, and wherein the displaying step  
includes displaying at least part of the transaction  
information.

15       7. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the  
step of accessing a database to obtain merchant return  
rules.

20       8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the displaying  
step includes displaying at least one of the merchant  
return rules.

25       9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the displaying  
step is performed by displaying at least a list of  
transactions, and wherein the step of receiving return  
related data comprises receiving a selection from the  
list.

30       10. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the  
step, performed prior to the downloading step, of  
determining whether the return is valid.

11. The method of Claim 10, further comprising the step of notifying the customer of an invalid return.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein the step of  
5 determining whether the return is valid is performed by accessing one or more returns rules associated with the merchant.

13. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the  
10 step of notifying a merchant of the return item.

14. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of notifying a merchant of information about the customer.  
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15. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of downloading the data for printing a return label to the web access tool.

16. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the  
20 step of delivering data about the return to a customer account record.

17. An on-line merchandise return system;  
comprising a computer system programmed to:

receive, from a customer, a request to initiate  
return processing via a web access tool associated with  
5 the customer; and

generate data for a return label in response to the  
request.

18. The on-line merchandise return system of Claim  
10 17, wherein the system is further programmed to download  
the data for a return label to the web access tool.

19. A computer product for providing return labels to customers to facilitate returns of merchandise, the computer product having instructions for:

receiving, from a customer, a request to initiate  
5 return processing via a web access tool associated with the customer; and

generating data for a return label in response to the request.

10 20. The computer product of Claim 19, further having instructions for downloading the data for a return label to the web access tool.

21. A method of using the Internet to provide return labels to customers for facilitating returns of merchandise, comprising the steps of:

collecting transaction data from at least one  
5 merchant, the transaction data representing at least one purchase of an item by a customer from the merchant;

receiving a request to return the item, via a web access tool associated with the customer; and

generating data for a return label.

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22. The method of Claim 21, further comprising the step of downloading the data for a return label to the web access tool.

23. An on-line merchandise return system;  
comprising a computer system programmed to:

collect transaction data from at least one merchant,  
the transaction data representing at least one purchase  
5 of an item by a customer from the merchant;

receive a request to return the item, via a web  
access tool associated with the customer; and  
generate data for a return label.

10 24. The return system of Claim 23, wherein the  
computer system is further programmed to download the  
data for a return label to the web access tool.

25. A computer product for providing return labels to customers to facilitate returns of merchandise, the computer product having instructions for:

collecting transaction data from at least one  
5 merchant, the transaction data representing at least one  
purchase of an item by a customer from the merchant;  
receiving a request to return the item, via a web  
access tool associated with the customer; and  
generating data for a return label.

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26. The computer product of Claim 25, wherein the instructions are further for downloading the data for a return label to the web access tool.



27. A method for electronically providing a return label to a customer that wishes to return an item previously purchased from a merchant, comprising the steps of:

- 5       initiating a return transaction in response to a return request from the customer via the Internet;  
          wherein the return request identifies at least an item to be returned and the customer;  
          generating a return label based on the initiating  
10   step; and  
          providing the shipping label to the customer in electronic form.

28. The method of Claim 27, wherein the providing  
15   step is performed by downloading data representing the shipping label to the customer via the Internet.